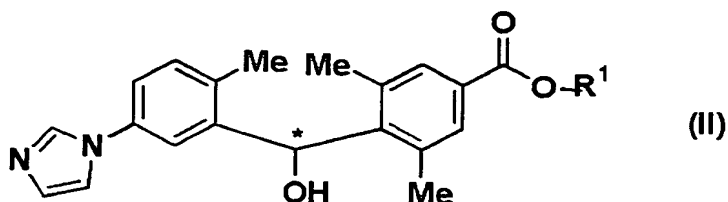
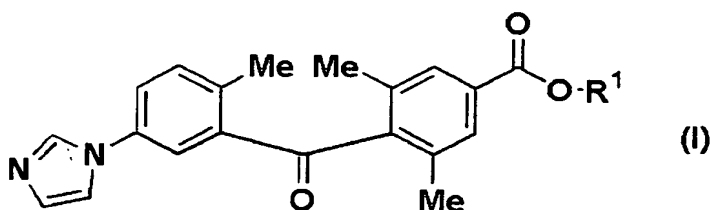


## Claims

1. A method of preparing optically active 4-[hydroxy[5-  
 5 (imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylphenyl]methyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic  
 acid represented by the following formula (II)

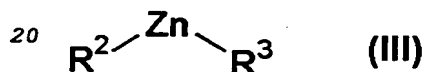


- wherein COOR<sup>1</sup> is a carboxylic acid or a carboxylate and the  
 10 carbon atom with \* is an asymmetric carbon atom, or an ester  
 thereof, from 4-[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylbenzoyl]-3,5-  
 dimethylbenzoic acid represented by the following formula (I)

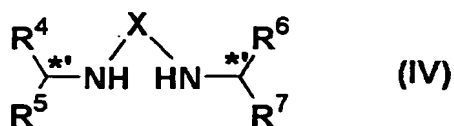


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- wherein COOR<sup>1</sup> is as defined above, or an ester thereof, which  
 comprises reacting the compound represented by the formula (I)  
 with a silane agent in the presence of a zinc compound  
 represented by the following formula (III)



- wherein R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are each independently a lower alkyl group or  
 a lower alkoxy group, or R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> in combination show an  
 alkylenedioxy group optionally having substituent(s), and an  
 25 optically active diamine compound represented by the following  
 formula (IV)



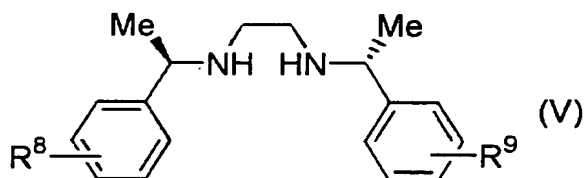
wherein R<sup>4</sup> and R<sup>6</sup> are each independently a lower alkyl group, R<sup>5</sup> is an aryl group optionally having substituent(s), R<sup>7</sup> is an aryl group optionally having substituent(s) or a lower alkyl group, X is an alkylene group or a cycloalkylene group, and one or both of the two carbon atoms with \*' is(are) asymmetric carbon atom(s).

2. The method of claim 1, wherein R<sup>1</sup> is an alkyl group optionally having substituent(s), a cycloalkyl group optionally having substituent(s) or an aralkyl group optionally having substituent(s) on the ring and/or the chain.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are each independently a lower alkyl group.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the reaction is carried out in the presence of alcohol or glycol.

5. The method of any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the optically active diamine compound is a N,N'-bis-(1-phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine compound represented by the following formula (V)



wherein R<sup>8</sup> and R<sup>9</sup> are each independently a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy group, a nitro group, a cyano group or an aryl group optionally having

substituent(s),  
or an optical isomer thereof.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the N,N'-bis-(1-  
5 phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine compound is (R,R)-N,N'-bis-(1-phenylethyl)ethane-1,2-diamine or (R,R)-N,N'-bis-[1-(4-bromophenyl)ethyl]ethane-1,2-diamine.

7. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the silane  
10 agent is selected from the group consisting of trimethylsilane, diethylsilane, triethylsilane, phenylsilane, diphenylsilane, methylphenylsilane, dimethylphenylsilane, diethylphenylsilane, methyldiphenylsilane, tert-butyl dimethylsilane, tert-butyl diphenylsilane,  
15 trimethoxysilane, diethoxysilane, triethoxysilane, tributoxysilane, triphenoxysilane, (trimethylsiloxy)dimethylsilane, bis(trimethylsiloxy)methylsilane, triisopropoxysilane, tris(trimethylsiloxy)silane, tris(trimethylsilyl)silane and  
20 polymethylhydrosiloxane.

8. A method of preparing an optically active 4-[hydroxy[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-methylphenyl]methyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid ester which comprises reacting 4-[5-(imidazol-1-yl)-2-  
25 methylbenzoyl]-3,5-dimethylbenzoic acid ester with polymethylhydrosiloxane in the presence of zinc di-lower alkyl and an optically active diamine compound represented by the formula (V).

30 9. The method of claim 8 further comprising a reaction in the presence of alcohol or glycol.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising a reaction in the presence of ether.

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